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THE POISON VENDER MORISON VERSUS THE "DISPATCH."

[THE following notice of a recent trial in England is from the London *Lancet* of February 18th, 1837. It will be read with no little interest in this country, where the plaintiff's "hygeian pills" have met with such an extensive sale among the ignorant and credulous.]

A cause was tried, in the Court of Common Pleas, Westminster, which occupied two days of the last, and the first day of the present week, in which proof was adduced of the lamentable credulity of the English people, with respect to the pretensions and nostrums of unprincipled, mercenary, cold-blooded quacks. The parties who had joined issue in this cause were Morison, the man-slaughterer and pill-maker, as the *plaintiff*, and Mr. Alderman Harmer, and Mr. Bell, the proprietors of the *Weekly Dispatch* Newspaper, as *defendants*. The plaintiff sued for damages on two grounds—first, because it had been said of him, in the widely-circulated paper of the defendants, that he was a "scamp," and had bolted, or had run away, because he could not face his creditors; and, secondly, because they had alleged that his pills acted upon the community like wars, plagues, and pestilence, and destroyed their thousands. Mr. Serjeant Wilde, who conducted the defendants' cause, throughout, in a most able and masterly manner, admitted that a verdict must go against his clients with regard to the imputation of running away and insolvency, but that with respect to the pernicious and destructive quality of the pills, he was prepared with proof to sustain the whole of the allegations of his clients. In the course of the trial the following were given, as the results of analyses of the pills, by Mr. Daniell, the Professor of Chemistry at King's College, and Mr. Hume, the veteran chemist, of Long Acre. The following are the analyses of twelve pills of the No. 1 and 2 Class:—

"Mr. Daniell stated that he had analysed both Nos. 1 and 2, and found that twelve pills of No. 1 contained eleven grains of resin of aloes and one-tenth; ten grains of cream of tartar and four-tenths; four grains and four-tenths of gum and soluble matter. He did not find anything else in the box of pills marked No. 1. In the box marked No. 2 he found, of resin of aloes, five grains and six-tenths; resin of *gamboge*, four grains and one-tenth; powdered colocynth, two grains; gum, four grains and seven-tenths; and cream of tartar, six grains and seven-tenths: that was all he found in twelve pills of No. 2."

"Mr. Hume, of Long Acre, stated that he had received some of

plaintiff's pills for the purpose of analysing them ; and also a box of powders. The pills being of unequal sizes, and the component parts not equally distributed, he could not analyse them except by quantities. Ten pills that he took from a No. 1 box weighed 27 grains, while ten smaller pills, taken from the same box, weighed only 20 grains. The same observation as to the unequal sizes of the pills applied to those which he had taken from box No. 2. In 50 grains of the pills taken from No. 1 box he found 22 grains of aloes, 23 grains of cream of tartar, and 5 grains of gum and extraneous vegetable matter. In 50 grains of No. 2 he found, of gamboge, 8 grains ; of colocynth, 4 grains ; of aloes, 11, or a little more ; of cream of tartar, 14 grains ; and of gum, 10 grains. Something would be lost by evaporation in analyzation ; but that was, he thought, of little consequence. He was satisfied as to what were the principal ingredients. The cream of tartar was very injurious, as it would convey the pills whole from the stomach to the narrower part of the intestines. Aloes would, in some constitutions, cause haemorrhage, or piles. Aloes are of a purgative nature ; gamboge is rather a drastic purgative, and sometimes rather violent. That depended on the quantity and the other substances with which it was combined. Both gamboge and aloes were medicines that required great care in their administration."

In the printed directions which were issued with the boxes, and in separate pamphlets, it was recommended that these pills should be taken in any one of almost the entire catalogue of human complaints, but it was particularly urged to give them in fevers, measles, scarlatina, smallpox, and consumption. Further, the unfortunate and deluded creatures who believed the statements of the quack, were told, with unblushing, and, we must add, murderous effrontery, that if they did not sustain benefit from taking the pills, they might be assured that it arose from no other cause than this—that *they did not take enough of them!* Thus, hundreds and thousands of persons may have been induced—in diseases where purging, in certain stages of the complaint, is sure to bring on a fatal termination—to persist in swallowing the poison until the tomb closed over both their sufferings and their credulity. Of course, witnesses were called who stated that they had been cured of all sorts of complaints by taking these pills ; and there are plenty of persons still living who are ready to swear that they have been cured of the most direful ailments by the touch of Prince Hohenlohe—by the sound of Irving's unknown tongue—by holding a firm belief in the "divine mission" of Joanna Southcote, and by the "rubbing" system of John Long ! With such persons we can hold no converse ; to reason with them would be a waste both of time and labor ; all that need be said of them is this—that they are exactly qualified to be the dupes of Morison, and that Morison is just suited to be their impostor. It is altogether a suitable companionship. But what a spectacle has this trial exhibited in a civilized country ! What a reflection is it upon the discernment of the public ! What a stigma on the state of medical law ! What a disgrace does it reflect upon the Government ! Above all, however, what is to be said of the conduct of the *Apothecaries' Company*, who have, so far as we can

learn, never taken a single step to punish Morison, or to abate the nuisance of which that reckless and impudent fellow is the author? In what character did this impostor rear his head in the Court of Common Pleas? In what character did he ask for damages? Obviously in that of an *Apothecary*, as he is, according to his own showing, a *prescriber of "medicine" in all cases of disease*—a *compounder of "medicine"*—a *seller of "medicine,"* and employs even a number of assistants to *administer*, and watch the *operation* of, his "medicines." Yet, according to the statute of 1815, he is a person unqualified by law to act as an apothecary, and is liable to a penalty of £20 on every occasion on which he recommends and sells a box of his pills in a medical case. He is equally liable to be fined for the performance of similar acts by his assistants. Scandalously, therefore, has the *Apothecaries' Company* neglected its duty in omitting to prosecute this most impudent and audacious quack. At the termination of the trial, quite true it is that the jury by their verdict justified the allegations of the defendants with respect to the indiscriminate and wholesale use of the pills, but, at the same time, they gave a verdict for the plaintiff, with two hundred pounds damages, on that part of the alleged libel which related to his insolvency, and the running away from his creditors. We think he ought not to have recovered one farthing, inasmuch as all that was said of him by the defendants related to him in his character of an *apothecary*. In that character, he was *unlawfully* engaged in carrying on his business; and we cannot conceive, therefore, how he could be entitled to receive a six-pence at the hands of the jury, for anything which was said disparagingly of him, connected with the unlawful pursuits in which he was clearly and avowedly engaged.

We cannot, however, from a cause which it is unnecessary to state, proceed at great length into the details of this case in the present number of our Journal.

In closing this notice we must remark that the profession and the public owe an immense debt of gratitude to Mr. Alderman Harmer, and Mr. Bell, for the spirited conduct which they have displayed on this occasion. In order to serve the public, they have incurred an enormous pecuniary sacrifice in the action. It affords us, therefore, infinite pleasure to perceive that the verdict of the jury, affirming, as it does, the pleas of justification on the record, with reference to the destructive character of Morison's proceedings, must entail upon the quack an expense which the sale of some thousands of his boxes of pills will not be sufficient to liquidate.

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ON THE MEANS OF ELEVATING THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

BY SILAS HOLMES, M.D.

(Concluded from page 155.)

BUT again, another step towards elevating the medical profession to the rank in society which it ought to occupy, must be *to enlighten the public*.

*lic mind with respect to the subjects with which medical science is conversant.* Every medical man must have observed the lamentable ignorance of the whole community on these important subjects ; ignorance not confined to the illiterate and vulgar, but extending to nearly all. How few, even of the most enlightened and educated, have anything like correct ideas as to the structure of their own bodies, the varied diseases to which they are subject, and the means of correcting those deviations from a healthy state which constitute those diseases. The crude and miserable notions entertained on these points by nearly all men not of the profession, must have excited, in the mind of every physician, emotions of grief, disgust and ridicule. Still so extensive, I might almost say, so universal, are these erroneous views, that those who see their absurdity, seldom give themselves the trouble to correct them in others ; and that, for the very sufficient reason that the attempt would be unavailing. In the present state of things it is utterly impossible to make those comprehend the grounds of medical treatment, who have not the most remote idea of the elements of medical science ; the only effect of attempting to explain them must be to give an imperfect or erroneous idea, and thus to confuse the patient and embarrass the course of treatment. The consequence is, that the great portion of mankind have no criterion to direct them in the choice of a physician, save his standing with his brethren, or, what is oftener the fact, the voice of rumor or popular applause. How often must it have fallen to the lot of all, to see talented, judicious and scientific practitioners unceremoniously dismissed from families whose members they have attended for years with fidelity and success, and to see their places supplied by rash, conceited or ignorant men, if not by actual and arrant quacks ! How often are the most appropriate prescriptions rejected by those who are as capable of judging as to their propriety, as they are of naming the constellations in their order ; and how often is the place of these prescriptions supplied by multifarious decoctions of various useless and inefficient herbs, whose only effect is to disturb the stomach of the sufferer and interfere with the salutary operations of nature ! How insuperable are the prejudices of the friends of the sick, and on what mistaken and ridiculous notions are these prejudices generally founded ! We find the sick attributing their diseases to causes which are either wholly imaginary, or utterly and evidently inadequate to the production of the effects supposed to arise from them.

From this general ignorance on medical subjects, arise all the varied forms of quackery. It is useless to tell me of the gullibility of man ; I know of no such faculty of the human mind ; but I do know, that ignorance is the parent of credulity, and that nothing is easier than to impose on those who are unable to detect the cheat. True, sooner or later, dear-bought experience assures the credulous that they have not only been swindled out of their money, but also physicked out of their health ; true it is, that a few doses only of the inestimable hygeian pills are sufficient to convince the patient that gamboge and aloes were not intended to be used as aliments. But how much better to have

known this simple fact before the quack had filled his pockets or the patient inflamed his bowels !

But the fruits of this general ignorance on medical subjects, are not confined to the manufacture and sale of individual nostrums or panaceas : they are displayed in the rearing of nonsensical systems. Does any man believe that a system so ridiculous as that of Thomson, could have subsisted for a moment in a community, the members of which were acquainted with the structure of their own bodies ? or that this erudite hostler could have succeeded in making any one believe, at this age of the world, that the human body is composed of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water ; and not only so, but, upon an assumption so false and so absurd, build up a theory of disease ? Yet this very "system" has traversed the whole Union, from Maine to Georgia ; hardly a village can be found in some of the States, where a Thomsonian doctor has not located himself temporarily : and even where they cannot be found, we are brought in daily contact with the parboiled bodies of some of their votaries.

All these and similar ruinous deceptions would flee before the general extension of medical knowledge. And who can say that quacks and quackery do not exercise upon medicine a most injurious influence ? Except in point of general respectability, the community, or at least a portion of it, regard the scientific practitioner and the illiterate quack as upon nearly the same level ; having in view the same object, and only differing somewhat as to the means by which that object is to be accomplished. They regard their mutual hostility as perfectly natural ; and they look upon the efforts of the scientific practitioner to put down the Thomsonian, as arising from precisely the same motives which might prompt an envious tradesman, or laborer, to undervalue the labor or commodities of some more successful rival. To place medicine upon its proper basis, and to raise its practitioners to their proper standing, the non-professional world must be made acquainted with the elements of anatomy and physiology. But here let me guard against misrepresentation. Medical practice must always be, to a certain extent, conjectural ; the science itself will probably never be ranked among the exact branches of learning. So infinitely varied are the symptoms of the same disease in different persons, and so opposite are sometimes the remedial means required, that it is vain and idle to suppose that, at any future period, every man will be his own physician. The necessity for the medical man will always exist, and his office and his art can never be superseded. Constant study, both of books and nature, is essential to his character ; and the value of his advice must always be nearly in proportion to the extent of his experience. I would by no means have all men treat their own diseases ; such an attempt would be impracticable and absurd. But it must be evident that correct knowledge of the general structure of the human body, would free the world from quackery and imposture, and render the task of the physician very much more easy.

Allowing this truth, then, and admitting also that a certain amount of medical knowledge among the non-professional part of the community is essential to the dignity of the profession itself, the question immediate-

ly arises, how is this knowledge to be communicated? In answer, I remark, that medical men themselves must be the principal agents. If the blind lead the blind, we all know the necessary consequence. True it doubtless is, that some few men, not themselves physicians, have attended to medical science; and true it no doubt is also, that some physicians know nothing of it. But these are exceptions to the rule.

The requisite amount of medical knowledge, then, may be readily disseminated, first, by the press. Nearly all the anatomical works which have been issued until within a few years, have been designed exclusively for the profession; and from the necessity of learning a new language before they could be comprehended, those not of the profession, who have attempted to master them, have found the effort vain and the study itself tedious and disgusting. It ought to be a matter of congratulation to those who wish well to medicine, that within the few last years, some very well-written books on anatomy have been struck off, designed exclusively for general readers; and it may be sufficient to prove that the community itself would second the efforts of those who attempt to disseminate knowledge of this nature among them, to state that these works have met with a ready and somewhat extensive sale. In fact, as has been before remarked, the study must commend itself to all. It need not, it ought not to, be accompanied with demonstrations upon the dead body; all the knowledge necessary for general students, may be easily obtained without passing through the disgusting scenes of the dissecting room; plates and explanations would be amply sufficient. The possibility of rendering the whole subject of anatomy simple, and easy of understanding, is amply proved by the fact that in some of our academies and high schools the attempt has been made, and has been successful. Let the works of competent and clear-headed men, who are able to write with clearness and simplicity, without the technicalities of art, and without tedious and unnecessary minuteness, be more extensively circulated and read by general scholars, and a great part of the work would be accomplished.

But, again, anatomy and physiology should form a part of college education. The ignorance on these subjects, as I have already remarked, is nearly as great among the intelligent and educated, as among the illiterate and vulgar. Until within a very short time, they formed no part of an university education, and while four years were employed in the unceasing study of other sciences, valuable, indeed, and important, but of no immediate application, these exceedingly interesting branches have been entirely neglected, or attended to only for the purpose of illustrating other studies; as, for instance, natural theology. In some of our first collegiate institutions at the present time, however, lectures on these subjects are regularly delivered, to the general acceptance of the students. At Harvard, regular lectures on anatomy and the means of preserving health, are delivered by the professors in that college. At Yale, the impressive and elegant lectures of Dr. Knight will not soon be forgotten by those who have heard them. In Brown, also, and Dartmouth, these subjects are ably treated, and perhaps in some other colleges with which I am not acquainted. Let lectures on anatomy and physi-

ology be delivered in all our collegiate institutions, by competent professors, and much will be done towards elevating the medical profession to a more determinate and higher rank. An influence would go forth from them, and from their students and their graduates, potent to put down quackery and diffuse correct medical knowledge.

Time would fail me to enlarge on other means and measures for accomplishing the same great object, and I have already consumed more than the subject perhaps deserves. But it seems to me important and worthy of attention, and if some influential and talented member of the profession were to pursue it farther, I cannot but believe that his labors would be eminently beneficial.

*Bristol, R. I., April, 1837.*

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#### APPENDIX TO DR. WEBB'S DISSERTATION ON RHEUMATISM.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

WHILST the concluding sheet of the preceding brief dissertation was passing through the press, it occurred to me, that it might be acceptable to the profession to have a few cases, confirmatory of the safety and efficacy of the opium treatment, furnished for their perusal, from the practice of some other physician. Two of my particular friends and brother practitioners, Drs. Mauran and Tobey, of this city, have had ample opportunities, for some years past, to test the soundness and success of the remedial plan whose claims to more general attention we have been advocating ; and the result of their experience is decidedly in its favor.

The somewhat anomalous case to which we have alluded, where the rheumatism was located in the knee-joints, occurred in the practice of Dr. Mauran. This was the most obstinate case of which we have any knowledge ; and though for a time it seemed indomitable, it eventually succumbed to the opium, and to this day has not recurred. Indeed one of the characteristics of this plan seems to be the *eradicating influence* it exerts over the disease, in which respect we must rank it pre-eminent above all other plans of which we have any knowledge. But to insure this, it must be steadily and perseveringly pursued, until the attack is completely overcome ; if we relax in our efforts (e. g. whilst waiting for the operation of a cathartic, in the few cases where a resort to such means for moving the bowels may be found necessary), the enemy will steal a march upon us, to counteract the effects of which will require renewed diligence upon our part. Among the host of cases that have been here treated, we can learn of but one relapse, and that happened to an individual to whose case reference will be directly made.

The most troublesome and perplexing effect that occasionally proceeds from the use of this medicine, is a profuse ptyalism, which may compel us to abandon it, for the time being ; still this constitutes one of the very few rare exceptions, and cannot be considered as a valid objection to the general administration of the drug, more especially as, al-

though uncomfortable, it is followed by none of the evil consequences that so strongly mark a mercurial salivation.

The history of the cases here subjoined, was, at our request, obligingly drawn up by our friend, JOSEPH MAURAN, M.D.

CASE I.—M. G., spinster, aged 35, of delicate and spare habit; from exposure, in watching protractedly, with a sick friend, was seized Feb. 23, 1831, with *inflammatory rheumatism*, affecting not only the extremities, but the muscles of the chest, and occasioning thereby extreme difficulty of respiration.

The pulse being full, was bled ad deliquum, after which she took with effect a saline cathartic, and was then ordered the grain pill of opium, to be repeated hourly. These pills were unabatingly continued 48 hours, when with the free use of acidulated drinks a copious perspiration ensued.

25th. Pain in chest and extremities abated; tumefaction lessened. Bowels have become irritable, for which she takes, as an astringent, hot ginger tea. Friends are astonished that no blisters or frictions are advised, having never witnessed a cure without them. Ordered a continuance of the pill every two hours.

26th. Pain, redness and tumefaction rapidly subsiding; complains of sweating too freely; pills to be continued every three hours. Bowels still irritable. Gums becoming painful, with a dry reddish hue. Pulse, which have been gradually abating, now become more frequent.

27th. Still complains of soreness of mouth. The friends are with difficulty dissuaded of their conjectures that it is the result of calomel. Rheumatic pains ceased.

28th. Inability to perfect motion of the legs from stiffness, though free from pain. Mouth and fauces continue sore; gums assuming a sub-scorbutic aspect. As this soreness, from former similar cases, is known to have resulted from the opium, the pill (pain having ceased) is now abandoned. Affection of the mouth continues with profuse ptalism, though unattended with foetor or looseness of the teeth, as from mercurials. Ordered a gargle of yeast.

March 1st. Has slight febricula, probably the result of secondary irritation from soreness of the mouth. Continue the yeast with mucilaginous diluents. 2d. Fauces coated with slight aphthæ. Extreme soreness relieved. Pulse subsided in frequency. Ordered small doses of sulphate of quinine.

3d. Aphtha separating, leaving the tongue and fauces moist and of a healthy color. Appetite returning; is allowed light farinaceous diet, with moderate exercise. 5th. Visited her to-day for the last time. Mouth and fauces recovered. Bowels kept soluble by the yeast. Takes porter as a tonic. No relapse has ever recurred, neither has she since been indisposed for a single day.

CASE II.—Miss I. S., aged 15 years; rather delicate; was first seen Nov. 30th, 1836. The father having been subject to the disease, called to ask my opinion of the propriety of putting her under the care of some "Steam Doctor," having realized, in his own person, the inefficacy of the most popular modes of scientific practice.

Upon visiting her, found she was laboring under *acute rheumatism* of one of the inferior extremities. Prescribed a saline cathartic, to be followed hourly by the opium pills, one grain in each. After the fifth dose she perspired freely, and the pain abated. Pill continued at intervals of three hours; redness and tumefaction soon subsided entirely.

Bowels not having been moved freely, directed a purgative to be given, and after its operation the pill to be resumed. Through inadvertence the pill was *omitted entirely*. On my next visit, the third morning, was sorry to find that the disease had extended to the other limb, the one first affected also again becoming troublesome. Ordered the pill to be once more repeated hourly, and at my next visit found the suffering had almost altogether disappeared. At the fifth visit was gratified by the announcement that my patient was well; since which there has been no relapse.

CASE III.—R. P., *Steam-boat Engineer and Practical Machinist*, aged 50, of steady habits. Had been afflicted severely for fifteen years, during which period he was confined with *inflammatory rheumatism*, three or four times each year; the paroxysms continuing from four to eight weeks. Has had, being a resident of New York, the best medical advice of that city. Has been heretofore treated by profuse general and local bleeding, blisters, rubefacients, &c. &c., with their adjuvants, vapor and sulphur baths; has tested fully the practice with *colchicum*; been three or four times profusely salivated; and, as he has informed me, has taken every popular empirical medicine with which our large cities abound. But for the past three years, finding all remedial efforts wholly unavailing, has trusted solely, and as he thinks *with equal advantage*, to the vis medicatrix naturæ.

When called to him, April 20th, 1835, he was laboring under the disease in its *acute* form. He had been upon his bed, unable to exert a single voluntary muscle, for three or four weeks, and was taking nothing but diluent drinks with light farinaceous food. His bowels were costive; skin hot and dry; pulse 120; extremities much swollen and painful. Prescribed a cathartic, to be followed with the grain pill of opium hourly, until hilarity and perspiration should ensue, then the same dose every two or three hours, to keep the skin open.

22d. Has taken, during the interval between my visits, 16 grains; ten hourly and six at intervals of two hours. Find the pain has measurably abated; motion more free; tumefaction and redness much the same; slept but little. Pills to be continued.

23d. Has taken 12 pills; is sitting up, and able to help himself to drinks, &c. 24th. Not visited. 25th. Find he has taken 16 pills. Has slept but little, and his sleep disturbed by dreams. Walks about the room, and requires no more attention. Is ordered to continue the pills at intervals of three or six hours if necessary.

26th. This being a cheerless, drizzly morning, called to see him; found he had left his room, and on inquiry, to my surprise, learned that he arose, washed, dressed, ate his breakfast heartily and had gone to his accustomed labors. The family had very considerately remonstrated against his imprudence, but all to no effect. He said he was well and

must go to work ; and although the weather continued rainy for several days, he suffered no inconvenience. The cure, I find, by inspecting my books, cost him but four dollars.

About eight months thereafter I saw him on board the steam-boat at work. He informed me that he had not been so well for 15 years ; having been able ever since I left him, to labor daily ; having had no relapse of former complaint, from which he had rarely been previously, perfectly free.

Dec. 28th, 1836. Was called to him and found him laboring under the same affection, but confined to the superior extremities. He solicited a box of pills. I visited him but five days, when he returned to his work cured. He has not since suffered from the disease, although from his profession, that of an engineer, he is subject to great atmospherical changes in passing from the fire-room to the open deck, in all kinds of weather.

The preceding case is the only one wherein I have witnessed a relapse ; and here it was but transient. During both paroxysms, but two cathartics were necessary to keep his bowels soluble. Says he would not hesitate to give all that he can command of this world's goods rather than be without "*the pill.*"

Before closing this appendix, we cannot refrain from once more earnestly calling the attention of our brethren to this most admirable plan of treatment. There is yet much remaining to be learned relative to the remedial properties of opium, and its proper mode of administration, in order to profit by its full sanative powers. It should not be indiscriminately, incautiously, or ignorantly used ; for it is indeed one of the *Sampsons* of the *materia medica* ; but still, that it can be more liberally employed than of late years it has been, and this, too, much to the relief of suffering humanity, we think ample evidence has been adduced.

Ere the members of the profession were so closely bound down, and so completely hedged in, each one by his favorite theory, when the clear light of experience was taken as the guide, rather than the jack o' lantern of vague hypothesis, this drug was held in higher estimation than it since has been. "Though in the present day," says Sigmond, "its virtues are not sufficiently estimated, or the art of administering it is forgotten, Murray of Gottingen has celebrated the praises of our predecessors, '*An-glorum experientia multas opii virtutes, antea ignotas, in nostrum cognitionem primum pervenisse satendum est.*' He has pointed out the first teachers of its uses, and their names may well be the glory of an intellectual body of men : Sydenham and Morton, Friend and Mead, Pringle, Whyte and Lind."

Well would it be for us, better still for our patients, did we more frequently recur to the writings of these eminent men ; learn their precepts more perfectly ; follow in their footsteps more closely. Nor should we mispend our time, were we to pursue our researches still farther ; and gather wisdom from Van Swieten, De Haen, Boerhaave and other departed worthies ; for the more we investigate the subject, and test the virtues of this article, the more shall we be convinced of its wide-spreading efficacy, and the more forcibly shall we be struck with the beauty and appropri-

ateness of the appellation conferred upon it by the followers of the faithful—"MASCH ALLAH," *the gift of God.*

T. H. W.

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LACERATION OF THE RECTO-VAGINAL WALL.

*To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.*

SIR,—Since the publication of the case of laceration of the recto-vaginal wall, which you did me the honor to transfer from the American Journal into your valuable periodical, nearly three years since, I have three times repeated the operation which proved so successful in the treatment of that my first case, and with equal success. One of the cases had existed fourteen years, was distinguished by a laceration of the rectum: fully three inches in extent, and very great disease of the parts affected, as well as of the constitution. In this case, too, the unfortunate lady was confined almost constantly to a recumbent posture in bed, to enable her to guard against involuntary dejections, to which the division of the sphincter muscle continually subjected her, whenever attempts were made to walk about. The other case had existed for five years, and the local and constitutional symptoms were very nearly the same, though not quite to the same extent. The last case was more recent. The subject of the case which has been published, is in the possession of excellent health, and has borne a child since the operation, without a recurrence of the accident. I find little difficulty now in performing the operation for the relief of this afflictive accident; and believe, as it is now executed, a failure is hardly possible. I would be willing to warrant success in 99 cases out of a hundred. Possibly I may draw up these cases when I have more leisure, and forward them to you.

Prince Edward C. H., Va. March 29, 1837. Yours, &c.

JOHN. P. METTAUER.

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BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

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BOSTON, APRIL 26, 1837.

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AMERICAN MEDICAL LIBRARY AND INTELLIGENCER.

THROUGH the polite attentions of Messrs. Weeks, Jordan & Co., of the Literary Rooms, No. 121 Washington street, Boston, we have been favored with No. 1, Vol. I, of this new medical periodical, under the editorial supervision of Dr. Dunglison, a gentleman eminently distinguished in the republic of knowledge for his attainments and devotion to the science of medicine. It is intended to be a concentrated record of medical science and literature. The first sixteen pages are filled with miscellaneous intelligence of an interesting character, gathered from various

sources ; and the remaining 112 pages consist of a republication, in part, of discourses on bloodletting, by James Wardrop, M.D. ; morbid conditions of the blood, by Benjamin Babington, M.D., and Dr. Stokes's theory and practice of medicine. With regard to typographical execution, the work is faultless. The subscription price is ten dollars a year, payable in advance ; and the numbers are to be issued semi-monthly.

We have felt it a duty, separately from all considerations of courtesy towards a fellow-laborer in the editorial field, to give our readers all the information in our power in relation to this new candidate for patronage, with a hope that the enterprise may find favor with the medical public.

In times past we have unhesitatingly expressed our opinion that it would be impossible to sustain, with any degree of strength, all the medical journals now in existence in the United States. Cities do not give the support which is necessary ; the country is the source from which the vitality of all these publications is derived, and their rise or fall must therefore always depend upon the prosperity of the profession scattered over the vast interior. If the price of a book is truly moderate, why there is hope for it ; but if it is necessarily high, so that, in comparison with an individual's receipts, it seems to be dear, a limited circulation must follow as a necessary result. Experience, the best and most certain of tests, in the management of periodicals, convinces us of the difficulty of continuing any one many years, unless the price is so moderate as not to be continually reminding the subscriber that he *cannot afford to take it any longer.*

For the credit of our common country, for the great and manifest advantages to be derived from the laborious research and industry of Dr. Dunglison, we hope the Library and Intelligencer will live and go down to future times.

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#### MASSACHUSETTS HOSPITAL REPORT.

THE two following operations were performed at the hospital on the 13th instant.

The first patient operated on was a little girl five years of age. Fourteen months since, she was severely scalded on the arm and side of the face. During the cicatrization of the wound on the arm, and wrist, the integuments have contracted so that the hand has been gradually drawn forward, and at present it forms a right angle with the fore arm. The bones during this time have become distorted, and accommodated themselves to their new situation. It was thought that if the strong bands which confined the hand were divided, the bones might be gradually pressed back and made to resume their natural position.

The operation was performed by Dr. Hayward as follows. A sharp-pointed bistoury was passed through the integuments, and the cicatrix entirely removed on one side ; a transverse incision was then made across the wrist, which immediately released the hand, so as to allow it to be carried partially back into its natural situation. The wound was dressed with lint, and the hand confined to a splint so as to prevent a new contraction during the healing of the wound.

The second operation was for an enormous scirrrous tumor of the breast. The patient was a married lady, 37 years of age, from the State of Maine. Two years since, she received a blow on the upper part of the left breast, and the same night observed a slight oozing of bloody

fluid from the nipple, which at the time gave her no alarm. About two months subsequent to the accident, her attention was attracted by observing the nipple to be somewhat drawn in, and on examination, a small tumor was discovered, about the size of a hen's egg ; this she thinks was not moveable. The tumor remained stationary until October last, when after wearing a tight dress she experienced a severe pain in the part, followed by a very rapid increase of the disease. This has been more particularly the case within the last five weeks, during which time the tumor, she thinks, has increased one third, and the pain has been such during the night as to prevent her from sleeping. On examination, the left breast is found to be of great size, and occupied by a large firm tumor, having all the appearance of scirrhus. The nipple is retracted, and the whole skin covering the tumor appears diseased, being thickened, and having the rough yellowish appearance presented by the rind of a lemon. The patient is very fleshy. The chances of the success of an operation in such a case appeared to be but small ; it was thought, however, that her suffering might be alleviated by it, and that she might possibly recover. The probability of a favorable termination was increased by her health being good in other respects. The state of the case being represented to the patient, she decided upon an operation, which was performed by Dr. Warren a few days afterwards in the following manner.

A circular incision was made through the integuments at the circumference of the tumor, with a small-sized amputating knife. The dissection of the tumor from the pectoral muscle was then commenced on its lower side. Here some difficulty was found in separating the tumor, as from its weight, broad base, and strong adhesions, it could not be raised as the dissection advanced. On this account great caution was used, lest, in case of the ribs being diseased, the cavity of the chest should be penetrated. At one point the pectoral muscle was found to be involved in the disease, and a portion of it was removed. A single artery required ligature. The edges of the wound were dressed with simple cerate, and a compress dipped in cold water laid over its surface.

Upon cutting into the parts removed, the glands, surrounding cellular membrane, and a portion of the pectoral muscle, were found involved in the disease, which presented the ordinary appearances of scirrhus without ulceration. Immediately surrounding the nipple, and over the gland, was a quantity of lax cellular membrane, which previous to the removal of the tumor gave the sensation to the touch of an obscure fluctuation.

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*Opium Eating in Siam.*—From the Journal of Mr. Johnson, a missionary now resident in Siam, being occasionally at Chautaboon and Baukok, we have collected the following remarks on the vice of opium eating in that country—the consumers, however, being principally Chinese.

On one of Mr. Johnson's visits to a temple, he found a number of idle and emaciated Chinese, evidently addicted to the excessive use of this powerful drug. Opium, says this gentleman, holds its victims by a much firmer grasp than alcohol, and more rapidly, too, prostrates all the energies of both body and mind. The Chinese are annually furnished with a vast amount of opium by nominal christians, who not only violate a wholesome law of the empire, in smuggling it on shore, but disgrace

the religion which they are supposed by the Chinese government to possess, by persevering in a contraband trade which absolutely makes mad men and idiots. Our own countrymen, some of them reputed of great respectability, are indeed deeply implicated in this crime of freighting a poison, which leads to certain moral infatuation, degradation and death, for their ships convey it from Hindostan, where it is principally raised, and force it on shore in spite of law or custom-house vigilance.

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*Circumcision.*—In remarking upon this requisition of religion in the East, a gentleman now in Constantinople says that the operation is sometimes performed on a magnificent scale, and, it would seem, wholly unaccompanied by those dangerous inflammations, spoken of by some tourists, as attended with fatal consequences. It is such an honor, he informs us, to have one's child circumcised on the same day with those of the Sultan, that the children of pachas were brought for that purpose on the 20th of December last—the time Sultan Mahmoud's two eldest sons were ordained to undergo the knife in considerable state. An elegant shed, two hundred feet long, open in front, was constructed expressly for their reception at Kiat-hane, and the ceremony was performed so openly as to be seen to some extent by the multitudes of men and women without. The children received each one hundred piastres and a new suit of clothes on the occasion. They reclined on beds for twenty-four hours, and on each succeeding day gave place to others. Numbers of them were adults, who had not found it convenient to be circumcised before; and beside, some of them were proselytes. Sometimes, though very rarely, the operation proves fatal. It appears that a considerable part of the prepuce is amputated, so that those who have had this maiming in infancy, present the anomaly, in age, of never having had the part which was excised.

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*Transylvania Medical School.*—An investigation into the affairs of the Medical Faculty of the Transylvania University has been made by the Trustees, upon charges preferred by Dr. Dudley, particularly against Dr. Caldwell, who has been unanimously dismissed—so says the Lexington Observer. On the 29th ult. the board of trustees were to re-construct the faculty; but we have not yet learned the particulars. Dr. Caldwell is certainly one of the most distinguished writers on medical subjects in this country. Of his courtesy towards others—of his decisive mode of enforcing an opinion, and of the estimation in which he is held by those who know him most intimately, we have no means of knowing. Whatever facts can hereafter be gathered in relation to the combination of circumstances which contributed to his very sudden ejectment from a chair which he has held many years, shall if possible have a place in our pages.

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*Scarlet Fever.*—From various sources, it appears that the mortality by scarlet fever, in the interior, has been, and continues to be, remarkably severe. How is it, that with all the experience physicians have had in this disease, the treatment is not more successful? It would very much gratify us to receive reports of interesting cases in detail, with the everyday treatment where the termination has been unfortunate, that some ana-

lysis may be made of the modus operandi, with a view to ascertaining what has been done, and what course should have been pursued. Great good would result to the profession from a frank and honest declaration of all the facts. The malady must be better managed in the United States.

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*To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.*

SIR,—In your Journal of the 19th inst. you published an extract from a letter from Dr. Mauran. In the prefatory remarks by myself are these words: "I will only add, to those who do not know Dr. Mauran, that he is a gentleman of science and in extensive practice, and that his statements are worthy of full confidence. I mean that he fully believes all he states." I regret to learn that some readers have put upon this last sentence a construction disrespectful to Dr. M. Words convey different ideas to different minds; and I will not stop to show that I think such a construction cannot be fairly put upon those words. To make the matter clear, then, I beg to add the following explanation.

Dr. M.'s statements are worthy of full confidence, I said. By the next sentence I meant to add this qualification. I do not pretend that my friend is infallible. He may have been too sanguine, though I have no reason to think so. But at any rate he does not write for effect; he wishes only to advance the cause of science, and means, without exaggeration, to state what he believes to be true. Yours, A. B.

April 22, 1837.

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*Medical Miscellany.*—A translation of the Class Book of Anatomy, last Boston edition, is being made at this time at Palermo, into the Italian language.—The medical association of this city hold their anniversary meeting next month.—Dr. Leach has been exceedingly successful in the application of Chase's truss: the demands for the instrument seem to be continually increasing.—Dr. Page's lectures in this city have been highly commended by gentlemen of science. He should be secured forthwith by some of the colleges—being one of the most prominent and promising teachers of chemistry in New England. His place of residence is Salem, Mass.—Dr. Lewis has been presented with a superb case of amputating instruments by a person who knows how to appreciate his attainments in surgical anatomy.—Dr. King's electrical apparatus, manufactured in Cornhill, is not only exceedingly beautiful, mechanically considered, but quite superior in effect. Medical electricians should have this in mind, when purchasing machines.—The inquiry is frequently made—has any one made preparation for taking the Massachusetts Medical Society's prize of five hundred dollars for rearing leeches?—The papers make mention of another case of death by *Thomsonism*, under highly aggravated circumstances.—Dr. Bradley's account of his practice in Siam, is one of the most amusing papers of the day.—What has become of the medical department of the University of Virginia?

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**DIED.**—At Gloucester, R. I., Dr. Edmund Town Waldron, aged 71.—At Nashville, Tenn. Dr. Edward Breathitt, a distinguished citizen.—At Cincinnati, Dr. J. P. Haynes—poisoned by a servant.—At Woburn, Mass. Dr. Wm. Buxton, 33.

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Whole number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending April 22, 27. Males, 17—Females, 10. Consumption, 3—typhus fever, 1—lung fever, 5—old age, 1—infantile, 1—child-bed, 1—liver complaint, 1—canker rash, 1—dropsy on the brain, 3—quinsy, 1—croup, 1—cancer, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 1—scrofula, 1—dropsy on the chest, 1—bursting bloodvessel, 1.

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Feb. 1.

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JOHN JEFFRIES, M.D.  
R. W. HOOPER, M.D.  
JOHN E. DIX, M.D.

Franklin Street, Nov. 9, 1836.

N16—tf

#### RETREAT FOR INVALIDS.

THE profession is respectfully informed that Dr. A. H. WILDER has purchased a large and convenient house in the pleasant town of Groton, Mass., likewise suitable carriages, horses, saddles, &c., for the accommodation of nervous invalids.

April 12—31

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#### TO PHYSICIANS.

**A PHYSICIAN** wishing a location in a pleasant town near the centre of Worcester County, Mass., where he can command a large business, may hear of one by inquiring personally, or by letter post-paid, at this office—the present occupant wishing to leave his business, on account of ill health.

April 19—tf

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